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ABSTRACT

A potential solution to a part of the philosophical and methodological problems of defining nonbureaucratic and alternative organization models is the suggestion that a clear, definitional distinction be made between nonbureaucratic models (which are developed using bureaucratic-related variables) and alternative models (which are developed using variables not attributable to a bureaucratic model.) This distinction would thus provide the possibility of developing two separate paradigms for the study of organization models that differ from the bureaucratic model. The advantage of such an approach would be greater logical clarity among concepts used under the rubric of each paradigm, a concomitant potential reduction in confusion arising from differing theoretical orientations which involve similar observational variables, and an opportunity to systematically investigate the "cash value" of each paradigm. (Author)

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TOWARD THE CLARIFICATION OF NONBUREAUCRATIC PARADIGMS FOR THE STUDY OF EDUCATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS
(A Symposium Introduction)

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The focus of my comments will be an attempted clarification of several philosophical and methodological issues related to the conceptual and empirical study of nonbureaucratic models of organization. Specifically, I will briefly review a number of current directions of thinking concerning alternatives to a bureaucratic model of organization, examine certain methodological issues implicit in these several directions of thinking, and conclude by suggesting that we might best proceed in studying nonbureaucratic models of organization within education by articulating more precisely than is presently the case those paradigms for study (Kuhn,1970) being used by theorists and researchers interested in the topic.

A first point I want to make is that *in developing nonbureaucratic models of organization there are, strictly speaking, only two basic conceptual points of departure.* The first option involves a strategy which employs the use of bureaucratic variables (Weber,1947; Anderson,1968) as the central working concepts of the model. That is, nonbureaucratic organizational attributes and characteristics are identified as such by reference to the fact that they differ by degree from characteristics of a bureaucratic organization, although the same observational variables are being used in each instance! Under the second option, organizational attributes and characteristics are conceptualized, identified and studied without regard to how they might be related to a bureaucratic form of organization. Specific examples of research utilizing these two conceptual frames of reference are replete

in the literature and will be used as the basis for the comments which follow. I will suggest there are particular philosophical and methodological problems involved with the use of each strategy.

BUREAUCRATIC-BASED STRATEGIES OF INVESTIGATION

Literature on bureaucracy is pervasive (Weber,1947; Merton,et.al.,1952; Blau,1955; Gouldner,1954; Udy,1959; Crozier,1965; Mouzelis,1967; Anderson,1968; Rossel,1971; Denhardt,1972) and, in fact, provides a dominant theme within the total body of literature on organization theory both within and outside the context of education. The explanatory power of bureaucracy, however, has only recently greatly been expanded with the development of research strategies which have conceptualized the variables of bureaucracy as being continuous rather than as reflecting "ideal-types." Hall makes this point quite clearly in the following statement:

> Since the general concept [bureaucracy] itself is a continuous variable, the attributes must therefore be treated as a set of dimensions. Unfortunately, this has not always been the case. All too often the concept has been treated in a unitary fashion and as a present-absent phenomenon. That is, the components of bureaucracy have been assumed to vary together, with organizations being either bureaucratic or nonbureaucratic....The more realistic approach would be to treat organizations as possessing characteristics of the bureaucratic model in varying degrees along the several dimensions of bureaucracy. (1972,p.67)

Certainly Hall's own research (1963; 1966) suggests the viability of developing instrumentation to identify the "extent" of bureaucracy within an organization. There are, however, several important philosophical and methodological issues which as yet remain to be explored with reference to the "multi-continuous-variables" approach to bureaucracy.

One pressing issue if we are to accept Hall's suggestion that "all" organizations possess characteristics of the bureaucratic model in varying degrees is the question of where we draw the dividing line between bureaucracy and nonbureaucracy?

This question seems especially important considering Hall's own research findings that no correlation coefficients between variables which measure the dimensions of bureaucracy, among those organizations he studied, were sufficiently high to permit the assumption that if an organization is highly bureaucratic in terms of one dimension, it is in turn high on any or all other dimensions. The fact of the matter seems to be, based on Hall's findings, that the dimensions of bureaucracy when empirically measured vary independently in organizations!

The methodological problem is to determine what variable combination provides a "most" valid and reliable indication of bureaucracy, while the philosophical problem is to determine the arbitrary dividing line on each variable score which indicates a shift from bureaucratic to nonbureaucratic organizational structure. The first problem is currently being worked on, though not resolved; the second problem remains almost completely open to investigation.

Punch (1969) has worked toward the answer to part of the methodological problem implicit in Hall's approach...within the context of education. Utilizing procedures developed in part by Mackay (1964), which in turn were based on Hall's work, Punch reports the development of an Organizational Inventory which is an education-oriented modification of a similar inventory developed and used by Hall. The 48-item inventory provides an attitudinal measure of six central dimensions of bureaucratic structure applicable to an educational organization (I,hierarchy of authority; II,specialization; III,rules for incumbents; IV,procedural specifications; V,impersonality; VI,technical competence). With reference to the independent variation among these bureaucratic dimensions, however, Punch has provided empirical evidence (based on a six factor varimax factor rotation procedure) which suggests that four of the six bureaucratic dimensions identified above (i.e., hierarchy of authority,

rules for incumbents, procedural specifications and impersonality) can be collapsed under the rubric of a single factor accounting for approximately 80% of the common variance among the six variables. At this point it is perhaps useful to let Punch's statement speak for itself:

> The key definitional issue is now clear. Bureaucratic structure in schools is realistically conceptualized as a unitary, homogeneous variable only if restricted to the dimensions of hierarchy of authority, rules for incumbents, procedural specifications and impersonality....If, as usual, specialization and technical competence are included, then bureaucratic structure is a two-factor and not a unitary concept. (1969, p.53)

Thus Punch brings us back to the possibility of investigating bureaucracy in educational organizations under a unitary, or at least two-factor, conceptual format. There are nevertheless still problems! We are still left with the possibility of obtaining a series of individual respondent scores from a single building which when taken together result in a factor loading on one or more of the six inventory factors which is considerably below the norm score provided by the total factor loading across the 48 schools in the original study. Given such a response from a single school, we are in a position of having to "arbitrarily" determine if the school should be identified as bureaucratic...or, viewed from the other direction, which is of greater interest to us in the present discussion...we are forced to arbitrarily identify the school as nonbureaucratic. In effect, *until research is conducted which provides proto-typic school scores with differing attributes of bureaucracy, against which individual school building responses can be compared, we simply have no reference point using the research strategy outlined above to suggest with any degree of assurance when a school is or is not bureaucratic in structure.*

A direction for research in the future, which I would like to suggest, might be the development of "school-types" using the inventory developed by Punch, with

these school-types located on a continuum ranging from most to least bureaucratic. The strategy suggested here is much like that employed by Halpin and Croft (1963) in their identification of school "climate-types" located on a continuum from open to closed.

The potential strategy suggested above would also be applicable, it might be noted, should the focus of study be shifted to the total school district level, as opposed to investigating bureaucracy at the building level. The problem would then become an empirical identification of districts that can be classified as most similar to prototypic districts ranging from bureaucratic to nonbureaucratic.

To summarize, the basic research direction of thinking initiated by Hall and pursued by Punch within education does provide one viable approach to identifying nonbureaucratic models of organization...an approach which employs the variables of bureaucracy as a practical way to determine nonbureaucracy. There are, of course, other current directions of thinking which use bureaucracy as a point of departure, and which provide an impetus for the creation of nonbureaucratic models of organization. None in my estimation possess the potential of the approach just outlined, even given the problems implicit in the approach.

One organizational model which suggests a direction toward nonbureaucracy while remaining under the broad rubric of bureaucracy has been identified by Tesconi (1971) as "bureautechnocracy." Tesconi identifies this model as..."a pattern of social organization and management wherein some features of the hierarchized, pyramidal, authoritative model of organization are linked with standardized rationalized means of technology with the overall aim of achieving control, flexibility, and efficiency in dealing swiftly with novel and unanticipated tasks." The key to

bureautechnocracy, once the concept is assimilated, is the formation of temporary task teams to deal with specific problems in an organization as they emerge, a strategy suggested previously by Bennis and Slater (1968), by Bogue (1971), and in our present symposium suggested by Cote' (1973).

A major problem with utilizing the bureautechnocracy model as an alternative to a bureaucratic format of organization is the seeming possibility of superimposing a research procedure which uses only bureaucratic variables for investigation, and which nevertheless provides a more comprehensive and accurate picture of the structural characteristics of the organization than would be obtained by isolating and investigating bureautechnocratic variables...if such variables turn out to be no more than the presence or absence of a procedure to form temporary task teams to resolve organization-related problems.

Another organizational model which moves toward nonbureaucracy while retaining bureaucratic characteristics is identified by Kaplan (1968) as "development bureaucracy." As with the concept of bureautechnocracy, development bureaucracy gains a major impetus for being from a perceived need for organizational structures which meet the demands of rapid change. Among the defining attributes of development bureaucracy identified by Kaplan are: (i) a theoretical orientation within the organization; (ii) an ability within the organization to shift priorities with time; (iii) a client-centered orientation; (iv) an orientation toward development as a primary goal of the organization; and (v) a major organizational focus on an experimental approach.

A major problem with development bureaucracy as a potentially viable nonbureaucratic model of organization is an issue of isolating variables which can be meaningfully used in a study of organizations from a development bureaucracy frame

of reference. Given the identifying characteristics listed above, which indeed have "conceptual" viability, it is nevertheless possible to suggest that a more traditional bureaucratic organizational format could, in fact, meet the characteristics listed as well as does the development model!

All in all, at this point in time perhaps what can most accurately be said for many conceptual nonbureaucratic organizational models is that they possess substantial heuristic interest, but they do not suggest workable empirical strategies of investigation as potentially useful as the approach employed by Hall and adopted in the field of education by Punch, Moeller (1964) and, within the context of this symposium, by Isherwood and Hoy (1973).

An ironic suggestion therefore presents itself; our most appropriate procedure for conducting research on nonbureaucratic forms of organization may well involve a research strategy based upon bureaucratic variables!

The philosophical implications of using bureaucratic variables as the basis for nonbureaucratic models of organization are touched upon in the following statement by Scheffler:

> It cannot be denied, of course, that scientists who differ theoretically may yet share a common observational or experimental vocabulary. This is indeed the basis for the differentiation made, in the standard view, between observational and theoretical levels of scientific discourse.... To adopt a new theory is, after all, to employ it not only in rethinking the phenomena, but also in reassigning the roles of relevant descriptive terms and in recasting familiar definitions and explanations....A new theory thus, in effect, provides new senses for old observational terms by incorporating them within a new framework of assumptions and meanings. (1967,p.15)

To summarize the potential of using bureaucratic-derived strategies as a basis for investigating nonbureaucratic models of organization, then, we might suggest three major issues to be considered:

1. It is important to establish some valid referent points for nonbureaucracy when using bureaucratic variables as a method of measurement, a task not yet accomplished with any degree of sophistication.

2. It is important when considering "conceptual" models of nonbureaucratic organization which employ a bureaucratic base to clearly specify model variables which might be used as a basis for measurement, so that the research potential of the model might, in fact, be assessed.

3. It is important to recognize when employing a bureaucratic-derived strategy to identify nonbureaucracy that we do alter the paradigm of our investigation, and we should therefore specify as clearly as possible the theoretical basis of our model as well as the manner in which we are using observational terms which might be interpreted under different conditions in some other way.

ALTERNATIVE MODELS

I now want to turn my attention to the second option for investigating nonbureaucratic models of organization, the procedure whereby organizational attributes and characteristics are conceptualized, identified and studied without regard to how they might be related to a bureaucratic form of organization.

Katz (1971) has recently identified three models of organization which vied with bureaucracy for predominance in American education during the first half of the nineteenth century. Katz labels these three alternatives to a bureaucratic model paternalistic voluntarism, democratic localism, and corporate voluntarism. It will, I believe, add to our present discussion of clarifying issues related to the development of nonbureaucratic paradigms for the study of educational organizations if a brief synopsis of the three alternatives identified by Katz is presented and explored.

The major identifying characteristics of paternalistic voluntarism as defined by Katz (1971,pp.7-15) include an administrative orientation and organization comprised of volunteer well-to-do members of society who in New York administered a network of schools organized under a strict Lancasterian system in which one school

master instructed a number of older pupils who in turn taught younger students carefully prescribed lessons. Democratic localism, the second alternative, is defined by Katz (1971,pp.15-22) as operating under an organizational format which we might best equate with neighborhood community control. In effect, under the rubric of democratic localism the administrative authority of the school resided with community parents who had children enrolled in a particular school. This organizational model was essentially in opposition to boards of education with centralized decision making power, instead prefering a model involving democratic decision making by parents at the local school building level. The basic feature of the third alternative, corporate voluntarism, as described by Katz (1971,pp.22-28) was the operation of single institutions as individual corporations operated by self-perpetuating boards of trustees and financed through endowment or through endowment plus tuition.

The descriptions provided above are, of course, incomplete. The basic concept of the model is, however, conveyed in each instance. What is perhaps most striking about the three alternatives identified by Katz, when examined in detail, is a potential problem of isolating model variables which will provide an operational procedure for determining whether or not an organization tentatively identified as fitting one of the models does, in fact, possess the characteristics of the model. In addition, as was the case with development bureaucracy, there is the possibility especially with reference to paternalistic voluntarism and corporate voluntarism that such models may include the characteristics identified above as key features of the model *while also if studied in detail possessing most of the characteristics attributed to bureaucracy* (i.e., hierarchy of authority, rules for incumbents, specialization, etc.)!

What emerges most clearly from the delineation of alternatives suggested by Katz, in light of our present discussion, is the greater research potential of the organizational concept of democratic localism as contrasted with paternalistic voluntarism and corporate voluntarism. The extent to which parents at the building level in school systems, even in our modern setting, have "direct" access to the decision making process related to the school their child attends is a quantifiable and measurable variable...a variable which is not usually considered among the defining characteristics of bureaucracy but which may nevertheless provide a working definition of an alternative organization model.

A suggestion that greater emphasis be placed on the development of an organizational model which uses direct parent decision making input as a defining characteristic is, in fact, a portion of Saxe's (1973) thesis in his presentation at this symposium.

Two additional directions of thinking concerning alternatives to a bureaucratic model of organization might be mentioned...the "learning web" approach to organizing educational access suggested by Illich (1970), and the nationwide alternative and free school movement (Graubard,1972; Kozol,1972). The central working variable in the learning web concept...not yet widely used as a research variable in studying educational organizations...might best be identified as "method of contact." Some attention should perhaps be given to the development of an alternative organization model which focuses on method of contact as a defining characteristic of the model! With reference to the free school movement, a great deal more effort should perhaps be made to study key organizational characteristics of free school models, although the following excerpt from Kozol's most recent book suggests the "honeymoon" period of the free school movement may already be at an end and the organizational structure

of free schools might be more bureaucratic than we sometimes imagine:

> The least democratic, least hip and least participatory arrangement... i.e., a small, benevolent dictatorship...is, to be quite blunt, a remarkably good and reasonable way to govern a small school. If the school, for example, consists in effect of four or five energetic parents, three or four teachers and a spin-off group of twenty or thirty additional parents, friends and teachers who are acquainted with the others, it seems both legitimate and proper for the eight or ten people who comprise the "core" to incorporate themselves as the legal trustees of their own creation, and to live henceforward with the odium, if that is what it is, of being known to others as a group of people who intend to keep hold of their own dream. (1972,pp.20-21)

CLOSING STATEMENT

A potential solution to part of the philosophical and methodological problems of defining nonbureaucratic and alternative organization models, and the position I want to stress as my concluding remarks, is a suggestion that a clear definitional distinction be made between *nonbureaucratic models* (which are developed using bureaucratic-related variables) and *alternative models* (which are developed using variables not attributable to a bureaucratic model). This distinction would thus provide the possibility of developing two separate paradigms (in the sense that Kuhn uses the term) for the study of organization models that differ from the bureaucratic model. The advantage of such an approach would be greater logical clarity among concepts used under the rubric of each paradigm, a concomitant potential reduction in confusion arising from differing theoretical orientations which involve similar observational variables, plus an opportunity to systematically investigate the "cash value" of each paradigm.

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